Government of Afghanistan have strengthened security for Indian personnel and projects in Afghanistan. In addition, for Zaranj-Delaram road project, being executed in security-sensitive. Nimroz/Helmand province by Border Roads Organisation, the Government of India has also deployed ITBP security personnel to supplement local Afghan security provided by the Afghan Government. The Embassy and the four Consulates in Afghanistan are provided security at levels determined by the Ministry of External Affairs in consultation with Government of Afghanistan. Indian nationals registered with the Embassy are being regularly advised about the prevailing security scenario in the country through security advisories. International Organisation/companies in Afghanistan provide security cover to their employees including Indians.

Exemption on property tax

†2236. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government gives exemption to different embassies on property tax;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has formulated any policy in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the total loss incurred by Government for giving exemption to embassies on property tax?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) to (f) Under Article 23 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) 1961, "the sending State and the Head of Mission shall be exempt from all national, regional or municipal dues and taxes in respect of the premises of the Mission, whether owned or leased, other than such as represent payment for specific services rendered". India is a party to the Convention and has ratified it on 15 October 1965. In order to give effect to this Convention, Parliament has enacted the Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention) Act 1972. In terms of provisions of the Convention, diplomatic Missions are exempt from payment of property tax to the foreign Governments concerned.

Task force on disarmament and non-proliferation

2237. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any task force has been set up by Government to review India's existing position on disarmament and non-proliferation issues;

(b) whether the task force has submitted its report to Government;

(c) if so, the details of recommendations thereof; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to implement the above recommendations?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A Task Force was constituted by Ministry of External Affairs to review India's existing positions on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and to make recommendations in the light of India's status as a nuclear-weapon state, India's security interests, present international realities and possible developments. The Report of the Task Force is under consideration of the Government.

Turmoil in Sri Lanka

2238. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the current turmoil in Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, whether Government has received any request for intervention in the turmoil;

(c) whether Government has otherwise analysed the scenario with its repercussions, if any, on the country; and

(d) the steps, if any, Government is contemplating?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) India is closely monitoring developments in Sri Lanka and is concerned about the recent upsurge in the violence and conflict in that country. Our policy towards Sri Lanka is based on the conviction that there is no military solution to the conflict. The way forward lies in a peacefully negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, acceptable to all communities in Sri Lanka, including the Tamils. It is with this in mind that we have welcomed as a first step the intention of the Government of Sri Lanka to fully implement the 13th Amendment.

Tour Operators for Haj Pilgrimage

2239. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the Private Tour Operators, who are allowed to operate the Haj pilgrimage in the country;

(b) the names of the tour operators, whose quota has been increased for the current year; and

(c) the budget spent for Haj programme for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) the names of the Private Tour Operators, who were allowed to operate for Haj-2007 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) No increase has been made in the quota of any of the tour operators for the current year (Haj-2007).

(c) The expenditure incurred by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in connection with Haj arrangements for the last three years is as follows:—

Financial year	Expenditure incurred by MEA
2004-05	Rs. 21,18,30,030
2005-06	Rs. 24,87,75,665
2006-07	Rs. 23,35,42,728